

Oct. 25 deadline for gas pipeline comments

By AARON CLAVIERIE
Staff Writer

GLAMIS — The first draft of an environmental impact report for a proposed 79.9-mile natural gas pipeline has been released by the Federal Energy Regulatory and California State Lands commissions.

The inch-and-a-half thick document contains analyses of a proposed route for a privately financed pipeline that would cut a swath through the washes and wilderness east of the dunes in this area and supply natural

gas to Mexican and Southern California power plants.

If the route is approved after the 90-day public comment period, the pipeline will be built on a strip of land that begins near Blythe, then meanders south through wilderness areas east of Glamis, crossing Interstate 8 near Ogilby Road and finally connecting with a proposed Mexican pipeline south of the border.

Imperial Valley residents have until Oct. 25 to submit written comments. There will be two public meetings in August — one in Blythe and one in El

Centro — at which residents can make oral comments.

After the October deadline the commissions will take months to look over the comments and announce whether the project is approved.

If it is, the commissions will put together a final EIR outlining the environmental effects the construction and permanent existence of the pipeline could cause and how those effects will be mitigated.

The pipeline is a joint venture between San Francisco-based Pacific Gas and Electric Corp., San Diego-

based Sempra Energy and Mexico's Proxima Gas, S.A. de C.V.

The \$230 million pipeline is designed to deliver natural gas to power plants in northern Baja California, Mexico and Southern California.

If approved by the commissions, construction on the miles-long stretch of 30-inch or 36-inch pipeline would begin in 2002, with the entire operation fully functional by September in the best case scenario.

Lynda Kastoll, a U.S. Bureau of Land Management really specialist, See PIPELINE, A5

basis.

Another consideration for BLM is the possibility the natural gas supplied by the pipelines and burned by power plants could negatively affect air quality.

"We have to consider it," Kastoll said, "It is one of our critical elements."

She added, "It's certainly a new issue because of the number of projects that can be started due to the North American Free Trade Agreement."

After Oct. 25, Kastoll said, BLM will investigate any negative impacts the project might create before approving it.

"This project is not going to get pushed through. The impacts and the benefits of the project are going to be analyzed."

To comment on the report or request a copy, send an original and two copies of your letter to:

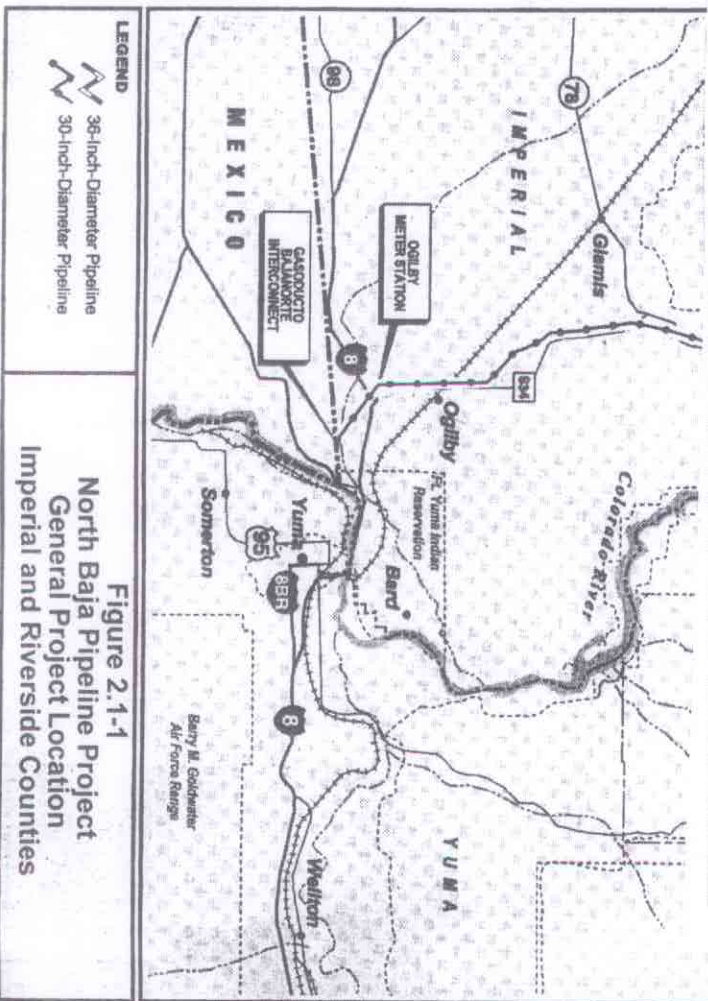
David P. Boergers, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First St., N.E., room 1A, Washington D.C. 20426, Care of: Docket No. CP01-22-000

Label one copy of your comments for the attention of the Gas Group 1, PJ-11.1.

To comment electronically log onto www.ferc.fed.us/efr/doorbell.htm.

Public meetings on the pipeline will be in Blythe on Aug. 22 and El Centro on Aug. 23.

Staff Writer Aaron Clavierie can be reached at 337-3419 or clavierie7@hotmail.com



COURTESY OF FEDERAL REGULATORY COMMISSION/CALIFORNIA STATE LANDS COMMISSION/BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT/BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

Pipeline

(Continued from Page 1)

said she has some copies of the environmental report for review in her El Centro office.

More than 700 copies were mailed Friday and, she added, "It should be available on our Web site shortly."

The BLM, including the El Centro office, is a cooperating agency involved in the project because the pipeline would pass through BLM land.

Any comments sent to Washington will be made available to the El Centro BLM office.

Kastoll expects to receive negative comments from environmental groups because construction of the pipeline and a meter station near Ogilby Road will destroy wilderness areas and vegetation.

She expects to hear from private landowners near the proposed site of the pipeline who are concerned about the safety of 500,000 cubic feet of gas streaming past their land on a daily basis.

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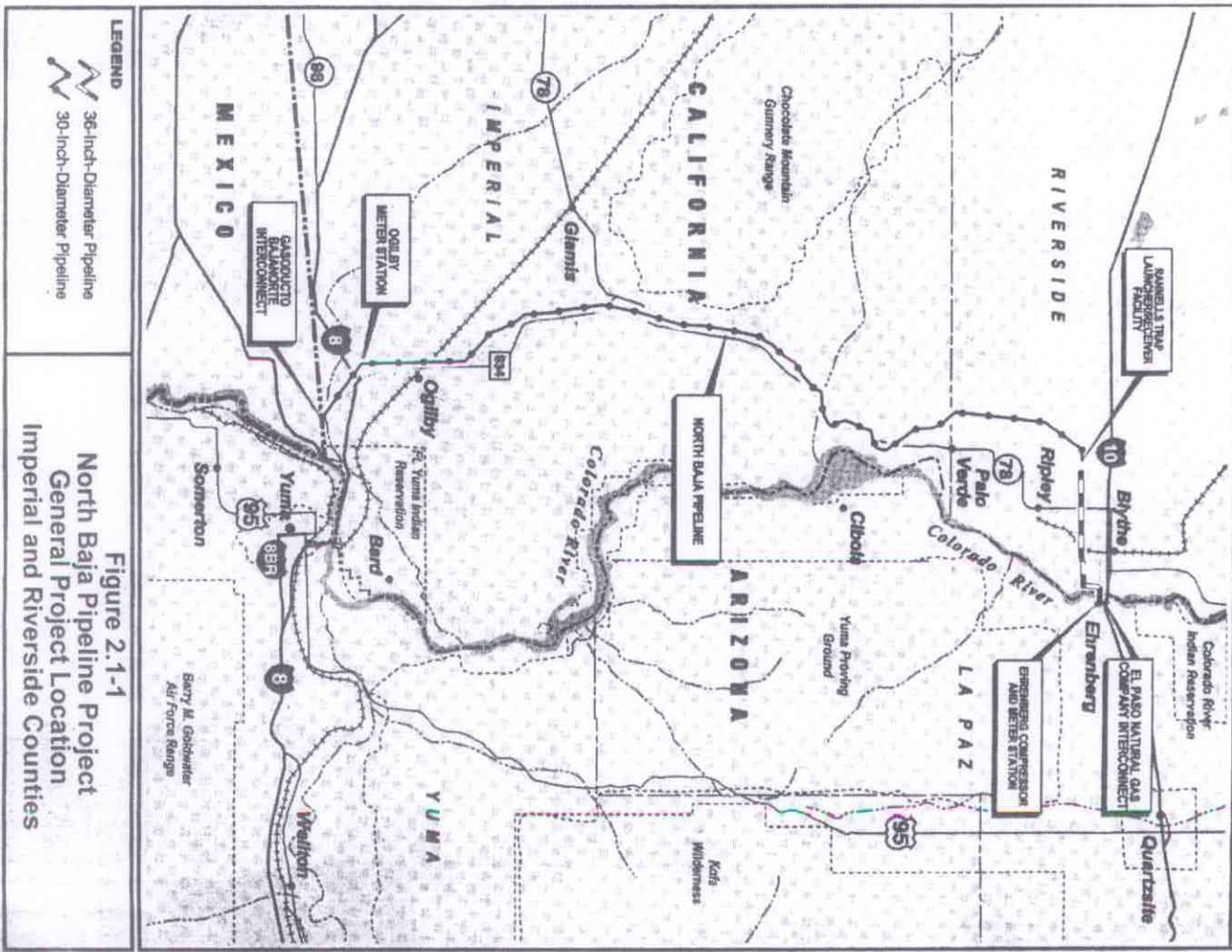


Figure 2.1-1
North Baja Pipeline Project
General Project Location
Imperial and Riverside Counties

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